

# In Memoriam.

THE

REV. WILLIAM RUSSELL,

*Ballyclare.*

BORN, NOVEMBER, 1801. DIED, APRIL, 1884.

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BY REV J. A. CHANCELLOR.

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THE rate of mortality among the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland has, of late, been unusually great. During the ten years, from 1873 till 1883, fifteen pulpits have been emptied by death, and their occupants transferred to the place of silence and deep forgetfulness. This is a larger proportion of the whole ministry than perhaps any other Church in Ireland, in a similar period, has called to end. And now, in the first year of another decade, he is in the loving and loved presence of the Rev William Russell, removed from our sight. His voice of genial wisdom and his counsel shall be no longer heard in our midst, and his name must be erased from the list of Christ's covenant witnesses. For a very different purpose, although suggested by the same solemn and inevitable events, we may address to the Church the words of the Prophet Zechariah, "Where are they? and the prophets, do they live?" The lesson we would deduce from these circumstances, and even startling facts, may be expressed in the words

Epistle to the Hebrews, as rendered in the Revised Version, "Remember them that had the rule over you, which spake unto you the word of God ; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever."

There are, however, certain mitigating circumstances to be taken into account while pondering upon the severe and stunning strokes that have recently fallen upon us in such close succession. For many preceding years the rate of mortality among our ministers was unusually small. In the Synod, immediately anterior to the above mentioned decade, five young ministers took their seats for the first time. Of the sixteen who have been last removed from us, only two may be said to have had a brief pastorate of two or three years, the remainder having been permitted to labour ardently and regularly in the Master's vineyard for lengthened periods, ranging from twenty to fifty-four years. In the case of nine the promises to the righteous man were remarkably fulfilled, even to the letter, "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing." "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." Looking back with melancholy and subdued feelings over the thickly crowded list of these departed worthies, while it is natural that we should feel most acutely the removal of two dearly beloved brethren from contiguous charges during the summer of last year, brethren who were in the prime of life, and in the heyday of their glorious work, taken from us while their breasts were still full of milk and their bones moistened with marrow, and buoyant with the noble ambition of spending many years in promoting all the great interests of the Church, yet from long habit and confirmed veneration our eyes rest upon five stalwart veterans who entered the arena of this world's conflicts, and were devoted to the cause of the Covenanted Reformation very near the same time, and after a distinguished and spotless career, in death were not long divided. In Sommerville, Toland, Dick, Houston and Russell, our small church had a staff of counsellors and workers, of leaders and defenders, who would have brought dignity, distinction and strength to any community. Their prominence in the estimation of the

Church was due not merely to their individual qualities, but to the remarkable manner in which, throughout their long lives and diversified labours, they were associated together as a band of men resolutely devoted to a great and noble work. Born, if not at the very beginning of the present century, within a very short time before or after it, they were each permitted to live and labour until well into the last quarter of the century. A period of less than five years saw them all started in existence and within almost the same period we have seen them all, one after another, honourably discharged from the warfare and the toil in which they delighted, and in which they were severally distinguished, that they might enter into the rest and reward of faithful servants. And faithful they were, even unto death. If, amid all the diversities of their gifts and opportunities of service, they were assimilated and united by one determining characteristic, that characteristic was unswerving loyalty to their vows, to conscience, and to Christ. Before heaven and earth they stood nobly erect as men

“Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
Nor palter'd with eternal God for power.”

Having espoused a covenanted profession, the whole bearing and conduct of each seemed emphatically to declare, in the words of a great historian, “As for me, so long as a shred of the old banner remains, I will abide by that banner; I will maintain those principles inviolate which, though they may for a time be borne down by senseless clamour, are yet strong with the strength, and immortal with the immortality of truth.” Their singlehearted devotion to the cause of Christ and unshrinking adherence to their conscientious convictions of truth and duty, invested them with a simplicity, loftiness and durability of purpose while they lived, that made them powerful for good, and has left upon their names the stamp of true moral greatness, after they are gone, that shall not soon cease to act as an example and a stimulus upon those who are left behind. In her heart the Church embalms the memory of her devoted servants. The words in which Tennyson in “The Coming of Arthur” describes the Knights of the Round Table, by whose prowess and devotion the King’s victories were won, may be applied to them, not in the way of



any contrast with their brethren and compeers, but because of their long individual prominence and undoubted services to the Church and to her King—

“ Few,  
 Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him;  
 But when he spake and cheered his Table Round  
 With large, divine and comfortable words  
 Beyond my tongue to tell thee—I beheld  
 From eye to eye thro’ all their order flash  
 A momentary likeness of the King.”

While classed and associated together during the whole period of their public ministry, and in the characteristic feature we have mentioned—which indeed is the feature mainly required in ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church—so nearly identical, it is not to be assumed that they did not possess their own separate and broadly marked peculiarities. Men of ability and culture, engaged in the most healthful, pleasant and ennobling profession upon earth, they were gentlemanly, cheerful, sympathetic and ready to do service to all around them. But while one was intensely logical, and another could be sarcastical as well as incisive in pressing home conclusions, there were others who studiously draped their arguments in the folds of a dignified courtesy or saturated them with the overflowings of an emotional and pathetic nature. The REV. WILLIAM SOMMERVILLE was born in the year 1800 and lived till near the end of 1878. He was the first of the above-mentioned five ministers to be called home, as he had, no doubt, sustained more severe exposure and fatigue than the others, arising from the constant strains and perils incident to mission work in the British North American Colonies. But his spirit was dauntless and self-reliant, and his activity indefatigable. Whether in advancing the Church's lines or riding her marches, in building up saints and comforting the sorrowful, or in confuting and confounding the adversaries of the faith, and of a Scriptural worship, he was a veritable host within himself—“The chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof.” Having none near at hand to bear with him the burden and heat of the day, he girded up his loins for every kind of work, and no emergency found him either incompetent or off his guard. Like

the fig-bearing sycamore of the Bible, which was valued alike for its wood, shade and fruit, he had room for fullest development in the large open field in which he was planted, and could supply food to the hungry, shelter to the distressed, a staff on which the weary pilgrim might lean, weapons of warfare in abundance, of diverse kinds, for every trusty hand, and standards, strong and lofty, from which to display the banner for Christ's crown and covenant, which he was so eager to see unfurled and saluted in every part of the world.

The REV. WILLIAM TOLAND, born in 1801, entered upon his regular pastoral work about the same time as Mr. Sommerville, and was but two months later in entering into the joy of his Lord. Genial, refined and cultured with unceasing carefulness, his every movement and word revealed the benignant gentlemanliness of his loving nature. Pressed down at times, and almost broken under the pressure of a nervous affliction, he seemed to open every pore that he might absorb more fully the reviving and refreshing influences of true religion. Hence on his return to the pulpit, or to Christian intercourse, he was delightfully redolent with the odours of the King's immediate presence. "All thy garments are of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." No man, living or dead, could have been more tenderly attached to the cause of Christ and of the Covenanted Reformation, or more willing to endure reproach or suffering in their defence, yet so eager was he to impart to others the sustenance and the sweetness of that grace he had so largely imbibed, that he would only have rendered in words the opinion, at least of all around him, if he had said, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever."

The REV. JAMES DICK, D.D., was born before the previous century had quite expired, and lived into the summer of 1880, and like his brother-in-law, Dr. Thomas Houston, was an ordained minister exactly fifty-four years. These honoured fathers were so well known to the whole church, and have been so very recently taken from us, that it is less necessary to attempt to recall the deep impression which their labours and their consecrated talents left upon the Church. Dr. Dick had versatile gifts, and an inexhaustible wealth of pleasantness and

wisdom, but his solemn determination to maintain with consistency the testimony that he held, imposed a restraint on the exuberance of his powers, and impressed an aspect of pre-eminent strength and immovableness upon his character. He was like the hardy oak or the enduring cedar, able to shelter and protect others, as well as to maintain his own position, and in no wise anxious to enter into competition with the more gaudy and applauded, or more favourably situated trees of the forest.

DR. HOUSTON, not less staunch to the peculiar principles and testimony of the Church, and surpassing them all in the acquired results of varied scholarship and an insatiable thirst for knowledge, was impelled, by his humble, devout, and self-conquering spirit, to be more abundant in labours for the advancement of religion and the honour of the Church. The desire to bring sinners to the Saviour, and to extend the glory of His dominion, was the ruling passion of his life, strong even in death. Not seeking great things for himself, but to do great things for his Master, he expended all his vitality in the incessant production of such fruit as might redound to the salvation of many. Like the apple or citron tree of the Song of Solomon, to which the spouse likens her Beloved, he delighted in ministering to the comfort and full satisfaction of hungry souls, and while Christ alone was magnified in his preaching, multitudes could say of him, as the instrumental cause of their refreshment, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

The REV. WILLIAM RUSSELL, born close upon the commencement of the century, and gathered to his fathers only in the spring of the present year, had reached an age somewhat in advance of the others, and was not unworthy to stand in rank with the first five. Tall, upright, powerful in his bodily conformation, his splendid physique was but the fitting mould and type of his moral and intellectual superiority. Modest and retiring in disposition, severe in self-scrutiny, and sensitively shrinking from every form of self-flattery or self-assertion, he was somewhat slow in conscious development, and avoided rather than pandered to the commendation that cometh from men. But like all slow growing plants, his roots went deep into the soil and his grasp of principles was singularly firm, tenacious and masterful. Solid rather than vivacious, enduring rather than demonstrative, tower

ing rather than expansive, the concentrated strength of his inner life forced itself steadily upwards till he came to be recognised in a wide district surrounding his home and throughout the Church as a model of uprightness and consistency, of high purpose and aim, of unbending integrity, of unwearying service, of unyielding stability, of unsurpassed dignity of spirit and deportment, and of whole-hearted devotion to the cause and testimony of Jesus Christ. When the text of the memorial sermon, preached on the Sabbath after his burial was announced, it was felt and acknowledged to be a fair representation and portraiture of the style and course of his entire life. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing. To show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him," (Psalm xcii., 12-15).

William Russell was born in the townland of Ballymaghee, near to Bangor, in the year 1801. His ancestors were respectable farmers, and had resided in the same place since their removal from Scotland, which was probably in the period of the persecution, firmly maintaining their connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church. His father, who also was called William, was in all respects the very prototype of what his son attained to in later years. He has been described to me by a lady, who knew the family in her childhood, as tall, portly, athletic, and although only an ordinary farmer, yet respected in the district as an upright Christian gentleman. In 1852 he died at the advanced age of 92, venerated and beloved by all who knew him. The family was regarded as intelligent and godly, much beyond what was common at the time—their mother's name was Kelly. Young William Russell was considered to be exceptionally good, and was spoken of as a great comfort to his parents, and a blessing and an example to the whole neighbourhood. Not only was he gentle, well-conducted, and disposed to go about doing good, but it was known that he feared God from his youth. Showing early the fruits of much thoughtfulness and self-discipline, he was induced to undertake the instruction of children around his home, although at that time he does not seem to have definitely contemplated the Christian ministry.



His course was shaped out and determined for him from time to time, very much by the intervention of others. In 1823 Dr. Blaine, afterwards of the Belfast Institution, opened a superior school in Bangor. Mr. Russell entered it as a pupil, but was immediately employed in teaching Mathematics, and persuaded to commence the study of classics. In the Autumn of 1826 he entered upon the usual course of study in Belfast College. Though in most of his classes he was a prizeman, yet in the first year, having been advised to take the Senior Mathematical Class, he failed to obtain the first place. In 1836 he went to Edinburgh University for the study of Chemistry, Natural History and Anatomy, although he had already completed his Theological course of three years under Dr. A. Symington at Paisley. At the close of his second session at the Hall, when Dr. Symington was handing him the usual class certificate, he told him not to return for a third session, it was unnecessary, as he knew quite enough Theology for beginning the work of the ministry, and if there should be any objection he would answer for it to the Presbytery. This suggestion, however, was not entertained. Every subject he studied was mastered in detail, and his mind was thoroughly matured before he would consent to take an advancing step or to appear before the Church in public.

Mr. Russell's family, we have said, continued to maintain their connection with the Society people in Scotland, who had been the object of so much savage and relentless persecution, from the time when they came to seek a quiet settlement in the North of Ireland. Many other families, in similar circumstances, had found a refuge and home in different parts of the Ards. When a unanimous call was prepared for the REV. WILLIAM STAVELY at Newtonards on the 31st December 1771, the heading of it was, "Call of a meeting of the Covenanted Electors between the Bridge of Dromore and Donaghadee in the County of Down." The congregation was divided into three parts—The Lower, Middle and Upper. The Lower part extended from Donaghadee to Comber, and included eight regularly constituted Societies, one of which met in Ballymaghee, probably in the house of William Russell. Another sat in the house of John Bearns in The Cotton, for fifty years. John Bearns and William Russell are both mentioned among the general Collectors of Stipend for the Lower part, in successive years. But before the subject of this sketch



was born, Mr. Stavely had been removed to Kellswater and Cullybackey, and this portion of County Down was for five years without a minister. On the 25th May, 1805, the REV. HUTCHESON M'FADDEN was ordained at Knockbracken over Lower and Middle parts of the former congregation. He was a tall, fair, slender young man, with natural gifts of oratory of the most winning and persuasive character; and in the delivery of his sermons his earnestness and fervour frequently intensified into such a glow of burning eloquence as alternately melted and inflamed his audience, but at the same time completely exhausted and consumed his own physical capabilities. His congregation grew so rapidly that in two years his labours had to be restricted to the Newtonards district. During the summer months he often preached in the open air to immense audiences, and with extraordinary effect. After a severe Sabbath's exertion in a field at Ballyholme, in full view of the Belfast Lough, with the low hills of County Antrim, Island Magee, and the Scotch Islands in the distance, he was so utterly prostrated in body, that he was forced to retire for change and rest to his father's residence at Magherabuoy, where he died on the 8th of October, 1812, in the 31st year of his age, and the 8th of his distinguished and memorable ministry—so speedily did the fiery edge of the keen blade wear out its slender scabbard. His daughter, Mrs. Hurst, of Osborne House, Manchester, still survives, and, inheriting her father's spirit, evinces a warm interest in the cause for the advancement of which his brief but brilliant life was so unreservedly expended. Mr. M'Fadden was, we believe, the first minister to open a hall for the preaching of covenanting principles in the town of Belfast. The number of Societies increased so rapidly under his ministry that Mr. Russell when a boy, as he told the writer, had pointed out to him from a hill near his father's dwelling, the sites of twelve Fellowship Meetings. It was in the high enthusiasm of such a time that his first religious impressions were quickened and brightened into guiding principles, and that his face was instinctively turned towards such paths of usefulness and self-improvement, as in due time brought him into the ministry of the Church.

\* Mr. Russell was highly prized as a teacher, and might have spent his life profitably and honourably in that occupation. The firm and gentle mastery he exerted over his pupils was amply

sustained by the thorough mastery he evinced of every subject he undertook to teach. For some years he assisted Dr. Henry in Newtonards, and afterwards was similarly employed in Portadown. The remuneration to be anticipated in the Church was much inferior to what he was able to realise in the school, but this consideration did not prevent him from wholly giving up himself to the work of the ministry in the Covenanting Church, as soon as he felt that the necessary preparations had been attained. In 1837 the Eastern Presbytery reported that "Mr. W. Russell having gone through his course of preparatory studies, in a very respectable manner, is recommended to Synod for examination." The names of thirty-three students were mentioned in the Presbyterian Reports of that year. Mr. Russell was licensed to preach the gospel in 1838, and on the 9th of June, 1840, he was ordained to the pastoral charge of the recently constituted congregation of Ballyclare. The families residing in that district in connection with the Reformed Presbyterian Church began to seek a supply of ordinances in 1831. In 1832 they were organised as a Station under the Missionary Board, and obtained monthly preaching. In that year their present house of worship was erected. The unhappy jealousies and contentions that had sprung up among the members of the Eastern Presbytery, were at that time troubling the whole Church, and obscuring the bright prospects that were opening up before her. Although Mr. Russell had been intimately associated with Dr. Henry, and other leaders in these disputes, he was of too calm and judicious a temperament, and too firmly attached to the principles and peace of the Church to be turned into a partisan, or deflected from the course which her interests and well-being seemed clearly to demand. Nothing could move him from what he believed to be the path of duty. The unanimous call from Ballyclare was accepted by him, and he was ordained by a Committee of the Missionary Board. Dr. Henry preached the opening sermon. The Rev. John Alexander explained and defended Presbyterian Ordination. Dr. Paul ordained with prayer and the laying on of the hands of the brethren, and as was usual in those days, a closing sermon was preached in the green outside the church by Mr. Dick, from the words—"Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one." This was the last occasion on which the contending par-

ties were united in any public service. On the 17th of the following month the three first named ministers, with the Rev. C. Houston and several elders, declined the authority of Synod and withdrew from the court. Mr. Russell remained under the Synod's Mission Committee, until the present Eastern Presbytery was constituted at Belfast on the 5th of August 1845. He continued to be the clerk of that Presbytery, and a most prominent figure in all its proceedings, until within a few months of the end of his life.

As a preacher Mr. Russell was clear, judicious, and especially edifying. His usual mental habitudes were calm, searching, vigorous and logical. He took a great delight in scaling the remotest heights of ascertained theology, and in endeavouring to fathom the deep places of Divine Revelation; but he never ventured to stand where he had not found clear and solid footing, nor did he ever allow himself to indulge in useless or fanciful speculations. Finding intense satisfaction in a manly grappling with, and full contemplation of, the difficulties and sublimities of Scripture, he was apt to assume that ordinary worshippers would be able to accompany him, as so many of them undoubtedly were in such bracing exercises, and that the common weaknesses and weariness of the body could interpose no considerable impediment. Hence his usual pulpit themes were ponderous, intricate, or profound. The books of Scripture that were shunned by others, as men would shun some seldom explored region of fabled terrors, were brought forward for regular exposition in his pulpit lectures; the passages that have been so often mutilated, and then abandoned by the thieves and marauders of the sanctuary, and which are left in that condition by robed officials, who, with averted eyes, hasten to pass by on the other side, were carefully examined, every trace of blood and filth and injury removed, their abstracted vestments and adornments restored, and then, raised from the ground in his brawny arms, would be borne exultingly into a place of safety and honour. His method was somewhat formal, and his progress slow, but he desisted not until the object before him had been well accomplished. A rare combination of mental and physical properties made this so easy to himself, that he could not always realise the possible incapacities of others. He regularly preached several hours during the heat of the Sabbath, and in



the evening spent two additional hours in a waste house that had been fitted up by the neighbouring farmers for the purpose, in discoursing to them of the deep things of God. And, instead of showing symptoms of exhaustion from these elaborate services, his uniform testimony was, that he felt fresher and more vigorous at the close than at the beginning. He has been known to walk seven or eight miles, conduct the usual services, and without accepting refreshments, walk home again, saying that he did not feel in the least fatigued. The blessing of Asher, in an unwonted measure, was illustrated in him—"Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

For the pastoral work of guiding, admonishing and comforting the flock, Mr. Russell was specially qualified. Sensitive, dignified and unobtrusive by nature, his kindly, sympathetic, gentle soul, brought him very close to the sorrowing, and impelled him to go very anxiously after the wandering or the diseased. This was the decided tendency of his life, even from his youth. Residing within a mile of the town of Bangor, he devoted a few hours occasionally to the poor families with whom he was acquainted, in ministering to them what succour and encouragement he could. Colonel John Ward was then in occupation of Bangor Castle, in charge of his orphan nephews and nieces. The Colonel, who had passed through the Peninsular campaign, returned a converted and godly man, intent on promoting the best interests of all within his reach. When visiting the poor and neglected in the town, he heard them speak with such interest of the visits of William Russell, that he invited him to the Castle, engaged him to teach the children of his deceased brother, conferred with him on his varied schemes of benevolence, and, in company with Mrs. Ward, many pleasant evenings were spent by them in spiritual conversation, and the study of the Greek Testament. Much as Mr. Russell came to be esteemed as a wise and judicious counsellor, and an able exponent and defender of the truth as it is in Jesus, he was, perhaps, still more appreciated in his personal intercourse, and for the quiet unconscious influence, he exerted upon a wide circle of acquaintances. He was a father to his people; and indeed was esteemed as a father and a friend in the whole district where he resided. The distressed,

the sorrowful, the afflicted, and the dying looked up to him, as to a helper and a consoler who belonged to them all. Persons of the most divergent creeds and modes of living would send many miles for him, at the approach of death, that he might become their instructor; and with alacrity he would have arisen at midnight, regardless alike of distance and of weather, to respond to such a call. The Bible Class on the Sabbath, and the Monthly Communicants Class, held in some central place on a week day afternoon, were no common place or unimportant institutions at Ballyclare. Persons considerably advanced in life would attend these classes, with anxious preparation, because of the amount of solid and satisfying information imparted. On one occasion, on an exceedingly inclement day in winter, he walked four miles to meet with his Communicants class. At the close some one remonstrated with him for walking so far on such a day. His reply was, Severe as the day is, I saw young ladies go out through it all on errands of pleasure, and I thought it would be too bad for me to hesitate to go on an important duty. During the last few months of his ministry, when unequal to the fatigue of the class before public worship, he conducted it in the evening at the Manse.

But that which chiefly individualised the character of Mr. Russell, entitled him to be reckoned with the other fathers with whom his name has long been associated, and has endeared his memory to the Church, was his public spirit and devotion to the cause of Christ. This lofty bent rose so superior even to his chief joy, as to dominate his entire life. Having embraced the principles of the Covenanted Reformation from conviction and pledged himself to the worship, discipline and testimony of the Covenanted Church, he brought all personal and worldly concerns into subordination, and made it manifest that his aim and determination were to be faithful to the vows he had publicly taken. A comparatively obscure situation and very limited means would have been galling to such a man if he had not found a life-object worthy of the sacrifice. The cause which involved the crown rights and dominion of Christ, the restoration of these Covenanted lands to a state of righteousness and peace, and the purity and power of true religion, did not seem to him a cause unworthy of the utmost that he could do and suffer. It was an honour, in his estimation, to bear reproach or loss for the name's sake of Jesus

Christ. Thorough devotedness to a great and good cause will impress the stamp of true greatness upon even an ordinary man. Brilliant talents and popular distinctions may pass like a meteor into the darkness, while consecration of heart and life to the cause of Christ enriches and ennobles the character of the humblest, and fixes it in a sphere of imperishable brightness. "But ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations: and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." On his death-bed Mr. Russell spoke with entire satisfaction of the opportunities afforded him of labouring for the testimony and in the work of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. More value, he said, is attached to religion and to principle in a small poor Church in present circumstances, and both ministers and people can do more to promote them. It is a pity, he added, that our younger men do not seem to seek the good and honour of the Church, as others had done. This has an injurious influence, and it is not true to the vows we have all taken. Then with emphasis, he added, the main thing is to be *conscientious*, the fear of God continually before the heart and the face is the best evidence of a renewed character. Undoubtedly this conscientiousness was the deepest and the strongest factor in the formation of his own character. He was a living impersonation of duty, both in public and private. His health enabled him, with absolute regularity, to attend to the business of his office, and none of its duties were either declined or neglected. No plan was ever adopted for the advancement of the Church's interests in which he did not heartily co-operate; no scheme for her extension at home or abroad, that he did not liberally and loyally support. After his death a member of the congregation observed, we were often astonished at the handful of silver Mr. Russell put on the plate at every public collection. The meetings of the courts and committees of the Church were attended by him with the most exemplary punctuality. On the 24th of June, 1880, his only daughter, the cherished delight of his home and of his old age, was taken away by death. Manly christian resignation characterized him throughout the trying scene; but the stroke shook his system to the centre, and from that day his hitherto unbroken strength began to decline. As the Synod met immediately after



he was absent the whole of Tuesday. This would have appeared a very trivial matter to many. To the man of habitual devotion to duty and to the public affairs of the Church, it was a cause of uneasiness and even distress. "It was the first day," he said regretfully to a brother, "I have been absent from the Synod for forty years. I enjoyed the meetings so much, and was so interested in the proceedings, that if at any time I was absent for a few hours, I felt it to be a great privation."

The second Sabbath of December, 1883, was the last on which Mr. Russell occupied his pulpit. A cold, which he hoped would be only temporary, confined him to the house. The gradual weakening of his system, however, soon confined him to his bed. The strong man gently bowed himself more and more, without knowing, as he said, the cause, until in about three months he was brought into the dust of death. During the most of this time his mind continued clear and vigorous, his eye bright, and his voice distinct as formerly. He had no raptures ; but, satisfied with the length of his days, he had no wish to live longer, seeing he was unable to be useful. The ground of a sinner's hopes was often stated by him with remarkable clearness and precision, and he referred to the long continued consciousness of the Spirit's work, and the corresponding, though defective, tenor of the life as evidences that could not be deceptive. When the passage was quoted in his hearing, "I know whom I have believed," he eagerly caught it up and said,—that is a perfect logical syllogism, and proceeding to enlarge on its several parts, especially upon the finished work and glory of Christ, he added, "I am persuaded He is able, there is no doubt of that—there is no risk in trusting all to Him, we may leave all in his hands and wait patiently the fulfilment of His promise. That is enough." On the 7th of April he quietly yielded up his spirit to God, and on the 9th his body was laid in the family grave, close to the church at Ballyclare. On the following Sabbath his friend and co-presbyter, the Rev. J. A. Chancellor, Belfast, preached by request the memorial sermon. The minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ballyclare, anxious to show his regard for the memory of the deceased, announced his pulpit vacant for the time, and intimated that his larger church was in readiness to receive the audience, if it was needed. This generous offer was thankfully embraced, and the larger building

was soon crowded to the door, by the representatives of a wide district, in which Mr. Russell had been long held in veneration. Keeping well within the lines of his own duty, and respecting the rights and feelings of all around him, his life had been not merely inoffensive, but noble, salutary, and elevating; his very presence was a power and a testimony for God; and in the affectionate remembrance of a large circle he is lamented as a genuine, though unobtrusive, benefactor.

“ His ready smile a parent’s warmth expressed ;  
 Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;  
 To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,  
 But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.  
 As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
 Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,  
 Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
 Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”